

U.S. Senator

TOM HARKIN OF IOWA



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Iowa Reporters and Editors
FROM: Kate Cyrul, Bergen Kenny for Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA)
RE: Background Information – the Budget Debate Rages on in Washington
DATE: April 8, 2011

Washington is within hours of a potential government shutdown over the debate of how to fund the government through the remainder of the fiscal year. Below is the timeline of activities leading up to this debate.

For more information, please contact Kate Cyrul or Bergen Kenny for Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) at (202) 224-3254.

- **2010:** Congressional Democrats Passed Eleven FY2011 Appropriations Bills Out of Committee.
- **December 14:** Congressional Democrats combined these appropriations bills into one bipartisan omnibus spending bill that significantly reduced spending by \$20 billion, a level endorsed by a bi-partisan group of Senators. Incoming Speaker John Boehner, however, launched a campaign to oppose the bill. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell joined Boehner to block the omnibus: **“I am actively working to defeat it. I think there are many Senate members who have provisions in it for their states who are also actively working to defeat it ... This bill should not go forward.”** [The Hill, 12/14/10]
- **December 16:** Congressional Republicans ramped up their opposition to the bill, making clear that they had 41 votes to block the measure and instead offered a short-term extension.
- **December 21:** Congress passed a short term continuing resolution funding the government at FY 2010 levels through March 4, 2011.
- **February 3:** Congressional Republicans Offer A Long-Term Continuing Resolution With \$32 Billion In Cuts. Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers Called The Package “A Responsible, Judicious CR That Will Significantly Reduce Government Spending,” And Budget Committee Paul Ryan Said It Would “Restore Sanity To A Broken Budget Process”
- **February 10:** Tea Party Republicans Reject \$32 Billion In Cuts, Forced Leadership To Make Deeper Cuts *They Knew And Openly Admitted Were Both Dangerous To The Economy And Unlikely To Pass The Senate*

Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers: Cutting Any Deeper Than Original House Proposal Could Have “Substantial Consequences.” According to the New York Times, “Mr. Rogers and other Republicans warned that doubling the cuts could have substantial consequences for federal agencies, resulting in layoffs and furloughs of federal law enforcement officers and air traffic controllers, steep cuts in education and medical research programs and major changes at the Food and Drug Administration.” [New York Times, 2/10/11]

GOP Rep Tom Latham: Initial \$32 Billion in Spending Cuts “Enactable” But Deeper Cuts Unlikely to Fly. According to the Washington Post, “Rep. Tom Latham (R-Iowa), a senior Appropriations Committee member and close friend of Boehner’s, said Rogers’ initial package was probably ‘enactable’ in a deal with the Senate, where a large number of Democrats face reelection in 2012 from states that voted Republican last fall. Deeper cuts are unlikely to fly, however, Latham said, raising the prospect that Congress will merely extend spending at current levels to keep federal agencies open - denying Republicans a victory on their most important campaign promise.” [Washington Post, 2/11/11]

- **March 2:** Congress Passes A Two-Week Extension Containing \$4 Billion In Cuts; White House Enlisted Vice President Biden To Aid In Bipartisan Negotiations.
- **March 3:** After A Meeting Between Congressional Leadership And Vice President Biden, Democrats Offered \$6.5 Billion In Cuts, Which The Republicans Immediately Rejected.
- **March 9:** As Leading Republicans Predicted, The Senate Rejected The Tea-Party-Fueled \$61 Billion In Cuts, And Also Rejected Democrats’ \$6.5 Billion Counter-Offer.
- **March 15:** With The Help Of Democrats, House Republicans Passed A Three-Week Extension That Contained Another \$6 Billion In Cuts.
- **March 28:** Democrats Offered Another \$20 Billion In Cuts.
- **March 30:** After Another Meeting With Congressional Leaders, Vice President Biden Confirmed Both Parties Were “Working Off The Same Number” - \$33 Billion.
- **March 31:** At A Rally, Tea Party Republicans Demanded Deeper Cuts And Controversial Ideological Riders While Chanting “Shut It Down”.
- **April 1:** Republicans Waste Valuable Time on a Political Stunt of “Deeming” HR.1 Passed, Delaying a Compromise Measure Even Longer.
- **April 3:** Speaker Boehner Ups The Stakes And Demands Cuts That He Can Pass With 218 Republican Votes.
- **April 5:** Speaker Boehner Changed the Goal Posts Again, Demanding \$40 Billion Cuts Instead Of \$33 Billion.
- **April 6:** Speaker Boehner Insists on an Extreme Social Agenda Being Added to Spending bill.

Boehner Says ‘No Daylight’ Between Tea Party And Him. “Speaker of the House John Boehner said he is in lockstep with the Tea Party on budget negotiations despite claims from Democrats that there could be a deal if only he could buck the Tea Party. ‘Listen, there’s no daylight between the Tea Party and me,’ Boehner told me today during our exclusive interview. ‘None?’ I asked. ‘None. What they want is they want us to cut spending. They want us to deal with this crushing debt that’s going to crush the future for our kids and grandkids. There’s no daylight there,’ he said.” [ABC, 4/6/11]